GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TEXTILES
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1014
ANSWERED ON:01.08.2006
INCREASE IN WORKING HOURS
Meghwal Shri Kailash;Verma Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government has constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM)/ a Committee for making changes in the terms and conditions of service of labourers working in the factories and industry under Ministry of Textiles;

(b) if so, the terms of reference thereof;

(c) whether a proposal to make changes in the working hours from 8 hours to 12 hours daily and from 48 hours to 60 hours weekly and making changes in the Factory Act is under consideration of the GoM;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the GoM/Committee has submitted its report;

(f) if so, the details thereof and the reaction thereto; and

(g) the name of the competent authority / Department empowered to make changes in the Factory Act?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN)

(a) to (g): The Government has constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) on the "Textile Export scenario − performance, prospects and the way forward". The GoM held its meeting on 15th May, 2006, in which it considered inter-alia the following proposals for providing flexibilities in labour laws in the textile sector:

i) Provide flexibility to textile exporting units in hiring labour, by amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act. 1947, exempting textile units (units exporting 75% of their annual production) from the provisions of Chapter V(B), provided such units give employment for at least 100 days in a year for all their workers.

ii) Treating export activity in the textile sector as a public utility service, for the purpose of industrial dispute. This would require amendment to the Section 2(n) of the Industrial Disputes Act. 1947 declaring textile export activity as Public Utility Service.

iii) Amendment in Section 51 and 54 of the Factories Act. 1948 to increase the weekly working hours from 48 hrs per week to 60 hours per week and the daily working hours from 9 hours a day to 12 hours a day. The workers would suitably be compensated for working during the extra working hours.

The GoM, in its meeting of 15th May, 2006, decided inter-alia that the consultations be held with Chief Ministers / Industry Ministers of State Governments / Trade Unions leaders and other stake holders for considering proposed amendments in the Industrial Disputes Act. 1947 and Factories Act.1948. Power and transaction costs which are other State related issues be also deliberated upon during these consultations.

Accordingly, a Conference of the State Governments / Trade Unions and Textile Industry Associations was held on 25.7.2006 and discussed the labour, power and transaction cost issues in textile sector. The GoM has not finalised its recommendations in the matter as yet.